

Davenport Jail Now Toolhouse

By Frank N. Jones

Many towns in California are bothered by overcrowded conditions in jails but there is no such problem at Davenport. The Davenport jail has not had an occupant for at least 20 years.

In fact, many persons had forgotten the cement town even boasted a lockup. Late in April the board of supervisors granted permission to the Davenport Improvement club to store tools in the structure which stands at the rear of the Ocean View hotel.

Three days ago President Orlando, and Supervisor Alvin Gregory decided to look over the almost forgotten 36-year-old building.

They found it in good condition, the half-inch steel bars over five windows and eight-inch cement walls just as sturdy as ever.

The last time the double steel plate door was open was 11 years ago when it was used for the same purpose—tool storage. The WPA kept equipment in the building while putting in a sewer. When the work project agency ceased to exist the jail was left in perfect condition to receive "guests" that never came.

It was carefully cleaned out and its one bunk made up with two pillows, just like it was back when it was last used as a bastille in the late 1920s. When opened last week there was nearly half an inch of cement on the floor which had drifted in from open windows.

The jail is 15 by 15 feet with a cement floor and roof. It has one cell and one room, both with boiler plate doors a quarter of an inch thick, as can be seen in the picture. A short front corridor and sanitary facilities complete the interior.

Why does Davenport have a jail? To get the answer a bit of research had to be done back in World War I days. It was not hard to find the solution as one man knows all the facts.

He is Charles J. Bella, Davenport's oldest registered voter and hotel proprietor. He has lived in Davenport since 1905.

Bella recalls that prior to June 1918 when the county abolished Davenport township, the cement town had its own justice of the peace and constable. The justice was Alex Tutrell and Domenic Goba was Constable. Pete Garaventa was deputy sheriff under Sheriff Howard V. Trafton. Jim Harvey was Seaside district supervisor.

The minions of the law functioned but there was a hitch to Davenport justice. When a law breaker was convicted it took hours for the constable or deputy to drive him down the 10 miles of crooked Coast road to the Santa Cruz county jail. So Sheriff Trafton persuaded the supervisors to erect a Davenport jail.

It is much more solid than most all jails because there was plenty cement close by.



Before World War 1 and auto transportation, Davenport had its own jail. Last month the board of supervisors gave permission to the Davenport Improvement club to use it as a storage building. It took half an hour and a welder's torch to open the steel front door Thursday afternoon, the first time the door had been opened since 1939. Club Secretary Sal Celebrado is using the torch while Supervisor Alvin Gregory watches.

At right Mrs. Charles J. Bella, who often fed prisoners in the old days, looks at a rusty lock on a cell.

Savina Perez Is Sent To Prison

Savina Perez, found guilty of burglary in the second of the complaint of Alfonso was sentenced to San Quentin on Friday by Superior Judge L. Atteridge.

He was accused of stealing from Ortez.

Fellowship Event

NO ONE INJURED

Chrg. of Arthur W. F.